

*Approved Mini Meeting Summary
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
SFWMD, West Palm Beach, FL
February 19, 2004*

Welcome and Administrative Announcements

Jay Slack called the mini meeting to order at 1:05 PM and reminded everyone that the next regular meeting is on March 29 – 30 in Key Largo.

Working Group Members	Feb. 19	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	-	
Frank Bernardino – South Florida Water Management District	-	Joni Warner
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	
Alex Chester – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	-	Essie Duffie
Carol Clark – National Park Service	√	
Wayne Daltry – Southwest FL Regional Planning Council	-	
Dennis Duke - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	Erik Stor
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	-	
Christopher M. Flack – Office of the Governor of Florida	-	
Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County	-	
T. Niles Glasgow – U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	Bill Reck
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation	-	
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency	√	
Norman O. Hemming, III - U.S. Attorney's Office	-	
Kenneth B. Metcalf - Department of Community Affairs	-	Roger Wilburn
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	Marjorie Bixby
Fred Rapach – Palm Beach County Water Utilities Dept	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	-	
Jay Slack – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	Michelle Diffenderfer
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager	√	
Anna Townsend – Bureau of Indian Affairs	-	
Vacant - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection	-	Patti Webster
Joe Walsh - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	
Jess D. Weaver – U.S.G.S.	√	
Greg May, Special Advisor	√	
Rock Salt, Science Coordination Group Liaison	√	

Follow-up/Assignments from Task Force Meeting

Greg May reviewed the draft 2004 work plan (Encl. 2) that was provided in response to the Task Force discussion of priorities at its December meeting. This document was developed as a management tool to improve the alignment of specific resources with each Task Force priority. Greg noted that earlier in the day the Task Force had provided more specific guidance concerning areas of concentration for the Working Group. For 2004 the Working Group will continue to focus on the Interim Goals and Targets and the Interim Goals Agreement as well as the implementation of the other critical aspects of the programmatic regulations. The group will focus on education, sharing information, providing real time member feedback and on providing the Task Force with issues of concern or questions through Jay's report as the Chairman. The Working Group will devote the additional time and resources required to achieve consensus recommendations for specific Task Force requests. The Task Force asked the Working Group to identify the key strategic issues and questions related to Multi-Species Management. A professional facilitator will be used to help work through some of the tougher sticking points that will inevitably come up. Finally the Strategic Plan and Biennial Report need to be updated. The Task Force wants to actively participate in the development of the drafts and has asked for information early on. A draft Strategic Plan and Biennial Report will be provided to the Task Force at the May meeting.

Fred Rapach noted his concern with some of the timeframes required for implementing the Programmatic Regulations adding that some of the deadlines are very close. Greg May reiterated that the Task Force wants the Working Group to be involved and there are different types of opportunities for involvement. Many of the members have their own separate agency process to provide feedback. The Working Group will continue to have updates and mini-workshops where real-time individual interaction takes place.

These forums provide the Working Group with an opportunity to learn about the issues and to highlight issues to their Task Force counterparts. Fred asked what “consulting with” means. Greg read the definition of consultation from the Programmatic Regulations §385.10. He added that the Task Force would do everything it could do to match the schedule the Corps has laid out and that the Corps had an obligation to provide the Task Force with enough time to review the information. Fred noted that the Working Group needs to provide information in a timely manner for it to be useful. Greg said that to help in this regard OED would provide the information as soon as it is made available. Fred said he was not necessarily in agreement with the Corps’ process and letting the plan drive the goals and targets and said it needed to be discussed.

Regular Working Group Business

Jay Slack noted Ms. Klee identified the top two priorities for the Working Group as Interim Goals and Targets and Multi-Species Management. He would make sure the agendas coincide with the discussions they need to have similar to the last meeting where a workshop on Interim Goals and Targets was held. Joe Walsh said he attended the WRAC workshop and many in attendance came away confused regarding the purpose of the series of upcoming WRAC meetings. He asked for clarification of expectations from the Task Force regarding “who is doing what” on interim goals and targets. Richard Harvey said they need to add value to the process and noted his concern that South Florida will not stop growing and there will be things that will significantly impact their ability to track the accomplishments of CERP which is important for the overall success of CERP and its continued funding. He cited invasive exotic species as an example of something that could detract from restoration progress. Jay Slack proposed continuing the workshop concept to get everyone up to speed. Fred Rapach suggested going to the next level, to review the proposed indicators out for review. He noted that questions remain as to whether they are sufficient and whether they are the right indicators. Greg May clarified that a preliminary draft has been released for agency and public review in order to come up with a recommended draft. Once they come up with the draft recommended interim goals and targets, then they will consult with the Task Force/Working Group. Now is the time to get up to speed with the information that is available and individuals and agencies can provide input at all times. In response to Joe’s request, Joni Warner clarified that the WRAC workshops are CERP program requirement workshops and are intended to educate and solicit input from WRAC members, stakeholders and members of the public. No product will come out of these workshops that will be presented to the Governing Board.

Jay Slack said it would be helpful for the Working Group to have a workshop on Multi-Species Management to better refine their understanding and expectations. He noted Ms. Klee has charged the Working Group with the coming up with the three major questions and three major obstacles the Task Force needs to be aware of and specific things the Working Group would recommend. He suggested that if there are more than three and they are significant issues then he would present them in priority order. He hoped to have this accomplished by the end of the year. Jay reported the FWS has written the Multi-Species Recovery Plan that looks at ecosystems rather than species. They have a restoration plan for each of the twenty-three eco types in South Florida. Jay Slack said he could provide the draft implementation schedule, draft Road to Recovery (20 page document) and Multi-Species Recovery Plan on CD. Jay looked forward to input on these drafts. Richard Harvey asked if this was a single-species versus multi-species issue or a larger effort to deal with the more global challenges of ecosystem restoration. Joe noted that this was an opportunity to take a small section of our strategic plan and develop an actionable plan.

Marjorie Bixby stated that the Army Corps of Engineers recently released the General Revaluation Report Supplemental EIS for the Tamiami Trail portion of Modified Water Deliveries and the public comment closes on March 22nd. She noted the 7a was the recommended alternative and includes a 3,000 foot bridge and raising the profile of Tamiami Trail with an asphalt overlay in the interim until decompartmentalization comes along. She encouraged everyone to read the executive summary and introductory portion of the report. She noted that the recommended plan includes working out a right of way agreement with the FDOT to include making funding available to them to use to repair the road. She said her agency is concerned that the right measures are in place to protect the trail. Greg asked if options to maintain maximum flexibility for future CERP options were still on the table.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft 2004 Workplan